

23 November 1960

IA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

1997

THE CUBAN MILITIA

As the Castro regime continues to strengthen and tighten its police state control, it is evident that one of its primary instruments is the militia, a force of some 200,000 "volunteers" being organized with increasing efficiency throughout the island. Organizationally distinct from the regular armed forces, this militia is equiv-

alent on a population basis to a 5,600,000-man militia in the United States.

First organized after long Communist urging late last year, the militia has grown markedly in recent weeks as a result of the officially inspired "war spirit" of late October. The threat of an "imminent invasion"

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY REVIEW

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from the United States was used to justify a nationwide mobilization and an intensive training program to prepare "the people" to resist "imperialist aggression." Although the mobilization and "the defense of our revolution by the Socialist countries" now are credited with having staved off the immediate threat



Cuban Militia

of invasion, the militia continues to be strengthened.

The Cuban militia, similar in organization and purpose to that of Communist China, is not only a force for police control, but a means of subjecting a large number of Cubans to military discipline and political indoctrination. The militia also provides the regime with a cheap labor force while it reduces the threat of political unrest stemming from Cuba's chronically serious unemployment problem. It could also prove valuable against antigovernment activity in the less politically reliable regular armed forces.

Communist penetration is extensive at all levels of the militia. In Communist jargon, the organization of a militia

the organization of a militia is synonymous with "the arming of the people," an objective which Communist and pro-Castro groups throughout Latin America claim is a necessary ingredient of a successful revolution and must be accompanied by the destruction of the regular armed forces.

While the bulk of militia members--both men and women--undergo regular part-time military training and political indoctrination, a hard core is assigned full-time duties normally the responsibility of the regular armed forces.

various militia units are being trained in antiaircraft artillery, are preparing to manufacture anti-tank mines and other similar objects, and are operating at least some of the outlying stations of the internal communications network.

Meanwhile, the economic mission headed by Che Guevara arrived in Peiping on 17 November after receiving high-level attention and lavish praise at earlier stops in Prague and Moscow. In Peiping, Guevara had an "intimate" talk with Mao Tse-tung on 19 November and hailed Communist China for its "defense of our newborn revolution," adding that Communist China's "22 years of struggle ... has revealed a new road for the Americas." After a tour of a Chinese commune, Guevara said that "the Latin American people have many things to learn from the people's communes and all the other social systems adopted by China."